

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS ZEV YAROSLAVSKY AND
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One of the highest priorities of the L.A. County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is to reduce hunger in the nation's largest county by increasing access and participation in CalFresh, the supplemental nutrition food benefit formally called Food Stamps. This program is particularly important during these tough economic times.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the number of U.S. homes lacking adequate food has more than tripled in the last four years. In Los Angeles County, where more than 10 million people reside, it's estimated that only half of those eligible are receiving CalFresh food assistance, even though a record high of 1,061,000 individuals received CalFresh benefits in January 2012. Yet many residents in need of immediate food assistance are unaware that they may qualify for CalFresh.

In May, 2011, DPSS collaborated with various faith-based and community-based partners to implement a comprehensive and coordinated month-long CalFresh Awareness campaign, whose goal was to educate residents about the supplemental nutrition food benefit and to lower the barriers that might discourage eligible individuals and families from applying.

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The department also enlisted the help of the County's Department of Public Heath, local supermarkets, farmers markets, food banks, and local school districts in sharing valuable information about the CalFresh program, nutrition education, and the long-term benefits of exercise.

In addition, DPSS is working with its partners to publicize more convenient methods to apply for services, such as on-line applications and a web-based Customer Service Center.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim May 2012, as "CalFresh Awareness Month" in Los Angeles County, and urge all County residents to learn about and share information on the benefits of the CalFresh program with those who need it most.

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